



The world has become so complex that the idea of a power in which everything comes together and can be controlled in a centralized way is now erroneous.

-- Ulrich Beck

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2008 John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contribution to Teaching Award



This year's recipient of the North Central Sociological Association's John F. Schnabel Distinguished

Contributions to Teaching Award is **Debra Swanson**, Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at Hope College.

Debra, an NCSA member for 15 years, has been active in the Teaching Section and has given multiple presentations on teaching ideas and pedagogical strategies at NCSA meetings.

The Teaching Award is based upon the sharing of innovations in curriculum design, creative classroom activities, and/or development of instructional methods, the development of especially creative instructional materials, a distinguished record of publication and/or research on or about the teaching of sociology, and a distinguished record of contributing to the teaching emphasis at the NCSA.

2008

NCSA ANNUAL MEETING IN CINCINNATI

This year's annual NCSA meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio was held on March 27-29, 2008. Over 80 research and teaching sessions were held. Additionally, the High School Teachers Workshop occurred on Friday. And special tours of Cincinnati sites of importance to sociologists were available for conference participants.

Many individuals contributed to this successful meeting, but a special thanks goes to the Program Chair Lissa Yogan and Vice President Elect Lynn Richey for all their hard work putting together such a complex program with such a diversity of sessions.

The theme of the 2008 meeting was

"Common Situations: Complex Realities"

2008 Aida Tomah Distinguished Service Award

This year the NCSA is pleased to present the Aida Tomah Distinguished Service Award to **Paula Dubeck**, University of Cincinnati. Paula



is a long time active member of NCSA. She served as the President in 2001-2002. Paula is currently the Associate Editor of *Sociological Focus*. Her areas of research include women in professions, women in organizations and politics, and women and work.

This annual service award recognizes an NCSA member who has accomplished one of more of the following:

1. Service to the NCSA in a single truly outstanding activity, or
2. Service to the NCSA in many capacities and over a long period of time, or
3. Service to the NCSA throughout professional career.

Congratulations, Paula!

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

DR. JONATHAN TURNER

Jonathan Turner, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of California – Riverside, gave the keynote talk titled “The Practice of Scientific Theorizing in Sociology and The Use of Scientific Theory in Sociological Practice.” Turner began by noting that early in his career he thought that sociology would “take its place at the table of science by providing scientific explanations for the operative dynamics of the social universe,” and that these explanations would be used to “inform policy makers.” However, Turner now believes that sociology has been unable to fulfill this potential due to four fault lines: 1. a failure to de-



velop testable theories, 2. atheoretical research, 3. the politicized nature of the discipline, and 4. the view sociology is not a science. Turner then

asked a series of questions that served as the foundation of his talk, “What happened to sociological theory? What happened to sociological research? Why is so much research atheoretical? Why do we rely so heavily on the one methodology—surveys and correlations among variables—that is the least useful in testing theories. Why are practitioners left to sort things out on the ground without guidance from a cumulative science?”

Turner argued that “science uses abstract theory—laws and models—to explain the operation of those forces driving the formation and operation of the universe,” but today there is skepticism today about a theory-driven sociology. Many today believe sociological theories are untestable, thus the theory-research gap is created. Turner claims, “What makes a theory important and useful is that it tries to explain the operative dynamics of a generic and fundamental property of the social universe and the

forces and processes driving the formation and operation of this property of the social universe.”

Next, Turner claimed that “much sociological research is atheoretical because it is not directed at testing theoretical principles.” He noted that not all research should be aimed at theory testing but some research must address theories in order to produce cumulative knowledge. For Turner, the greatest obstacle is the overuse of surveys which is “not particularly useful in testing theories.” Turner believes that “most macro-level sociological theories require historical data.” He stated that for sociological knowledge to be put to use, “we need theorizing connected to research ... by institutionalizing the division of labor and the integration of these very different modes of intellectual labor.”

In order to make sociological knowledge useful, Turner proposes an “engineering model whereby general theories are translated into *rules of thumb* about basic social processes and then applied by the practitioner to meet a client’s needs.” Turner’s goal is to develop those “rules of thumb,” or theories about “generic social forces and processes that are operative when humans behave, interact, and organize.” At the concrete level, these rules of thumb would be taught in graduate school and referenced by sociological practitioners. To illustrate how this would work, Turner gave an example regarding social solidarity. A client may be concerned with “low morale, absenteeism, worker alienation, and many other labels denoting a lack of solidarity.” The social engineer would evaluate the situation by turning to the rules of thumb about solidarity. The rules, based upon previous empirical research, suggest how to change the situation by increasing or decreasing values in the principles.

Turner noted that the obstacle to such “social engineering” is the belief by some that “the discipline does not have any laws of human behavior, interaction, and organization.” However, he argues that “modeling and simulation, much like that done by geologists, meteorologists, structural engineers, and many others who must apply theoretical knowledge to complex empirical cases, should become more visible tools, just as they are

in other engineering sciences.”

Turner described his goal for the engineering applications of scientific theory, to “make sociology useful outside of the academic tower.” Turner concluded by noting that “most sociologists entered the discipline because they wanted to change the world in some way; social engineering is, in my view, the best way to realize this idealistic goal that drew most of us into sociology as undergraduates.”

KEYNOTE: NCSA Distinguished Teaching Award Talk

As the 2008 recipient of the NCSA Distinguished Contribution to Teaching



Award, Jay Weinstein, Eastern Michigan University, gave a keynote talk titled “Notes on Biography and History: All You Really Need.”

Following an expression of appreciation to the Teaching Award Committee, the first part of Jay’s speech noted how effective teaching is tied to loving the field, loving the calling of teaching, and loving one’s students. Jay then recollected the ways in which biography and history intersect in shaping the career of a sociology teacher. Next, three related principles were discussed:

1. Sociology as technology (and the place of altruism).
2. The intersection of history and biography (and reflexivity).
3. The integration of teaching, research and service as a sociological imperative.

Jay closed with an expression of deepest gratitude to the group to whom we owe the most for our success: our students.

The full text of Jay Weinstein’s Address will be available in an upcoming issue of *Sociological Focus*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

On Friday, March 28, NCSA President, Robert Shelly, Ohio University, gave the



Presidential Address on "Micro Lessons for the Macro World."

Shelly described how his early experiences lead to "a career long interest in the study of social inequality in micro settings."

For this address, Shelly focused on what he termed, "some deceptively simple questions and answers that illustrate the value of understanding principles that allow us to predict outcomes from knowledge of structural arrangements between actors in a social situation." Shelly centered on three questions to frame his address:

1. Why do parliaments in multi-party systems often produce situations in which governments are fragile?
2. How do inequalities in face to face interaction develop? How do people communicate advantages and disadvantages when interacting? Can we reduce these inequalities?
3. How does power manifest itself in exchange networks? What implications does this have for globalization?

Shelly noted how each of these



three questions were ones he pursued during his research career as a sociologist.

For Shelly, micro sociological studies employ a variety of techniques to examine relationships between social actors. Some of these studies focus on real world situations and strive for high levels

of face validity. Others focus on abstract social situations and strive for theoretical validity.

Shelly examined "three areas of research that employ the latter approach to identify theoretical principles which produce valuable insights about real world issues." Specifically, Shelly discussed Fragile Governments, Do you want your boss on the jury?, and Who makes a good trading partner? Shelly's illustrations of the principles underlying these examples presented examples of "the value of abstract, theoretical, experimental work in understanding events."

Shelly concluded by stating that "abstract, theoretically motivated work has great potential to help us understand real world problems. The potential contributions of the research trajectories I have outlined are due to the cumulative understanding developed from such research programs. While sociologists have debated whether or not the discipline has cumulative knowledge, or is even capable of it, I have been pleased to be a part of the development of three such success stories in the field."

A full text of Robert Shelly's Presidential Address will be published in a forthcoming edition of *Sociological Focus*.

NCSA Student Paper Competition Winners

Each year the NCSA sponsors a student paper competition for both graduate and undergraduate students. This year 27 papers from 18 colleges/universities were submitted. Dr. Fayyez Hussain, Michigan State University, Chair of the Student Awards Committee, announced the winners at the conclusion of the NCSA Business Meeting.

Graduate Division

1st place: Joseph D. Wolfe, Department of Sociology. Indiana University, Advisor: Brian Powell. Paper title: "A Time To Mature? The Timing of Parenthood and Alcohol Use"

2nd place: Deidre L Redmond, Department of Sociology, Indiana University, Advisor: Brian Powell. Paper title: "Does Parenthood Offer an Emotional Benefit?"



3rd place: Mary Therese Laske, University of Akron, Advisor: Brent Teasdale. Paper title: "How Structural Disadvantage Affects the Relationship between Race and Gang Membership."

Undergrad Division

1st place: Michelle Oyakawa, Denison University, Advisor: Todd



Callais Paper title: "Voice in the Online Communities: The Formation of Individual and Group Identities."

2nd place tie: Nikki Witowski. Saint Mary's Collage, Advisor: Susan Alexander. Paper title: "On the Rails: A Content Analysis of Contemporary Hobo Zines." and

Meggan Patty, Saint Mary's Collage, Advisor: Susan Alexander. Paper title: "Run, The Cops Are Here!: A Content Analysis of Teen Drinking in American Hollywood Films, 1984-2007"

3rd place: Jessica Hoover, Hanover College, Advisor: Keith Roberts. Paper title: "Undergraduate Students' Approach to Charitable Engagement "

Congratulations to all students who submitted papers for the NCSA paper competition!

RESEARCH SESSION: LGBTQ Identities

On Friday, a research session was organized by Susan Alexander on one of the emerging topics in sociology, LGBTQ identities. The four presenters are each engaging in research pertaining to sexual identities as related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or queer individuals.



The first presenter, Ahoo Tabatabai, presented a paper titled, "Complicating Sexual Identity: On the Intersectional Nature of Sexual Identity." Tabatabai described her work; "If a lesbian has a male partner, is she still a lesbian? This project proposes that just because a woman moves from having a female partner to having a male partner, it does not necessarily imply that she has made a transition from being a lesbian to being heterosexual, or that she has made a transition at all. There are many ways in which individuals can account for this change in genders. They may begin to identify as heterosexual or they may continue to identify as lesbian. Some women may explain the transition simply as a movement within the continuum of bisexuality or 'queer-ness'. In essence, this shift or transition may not be acknowledged by these women as a shift at all. There has been a change in behavior, but that may not register as a change in identity."

The next presenter, Elizabeth Walling, West Virginia University, presented on the topic "Heteronormativity and the Construction of the Heterosexual Subject." Her research focuses on how to further explore how one's sexuality relates to their social status, and how individuals position themselves to achieve a higher status. Walling said, "For this project, I will engage questions about how those who claim a dominant identity position (heterosexual) create and maintain their identity through everyday interaction. I am looking toward the rarely examined subject position of the heterosexual to gain a better understanding of how cultural scripts and regulations govern the presentation of self. In other words, I think it is interesting that people; gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, etc work hard to portray their sexuality. I want to gain a better understanding of the thought

processes that go into the portrayal of the straight identity, and talk about the lengths that people will go to make sure they are performing their identity in a correct or acceptable way."

Eric Swank, Morehead State University, presented a paper co-authored with Lisa Raiz, Ohio State University, titled "Predicting the Support of Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriages among Social Work Students." Swank stated, "Among other things, the social work code of ethics argues that social workers should not discriminate against people of different sexual orientations. This study explores the extent in which undergraduate social workers agree that the lack of legal recognition for civil unions and same-sex marriages as a discriminatory practice. After noting that roughly three-fourths of the sample supports civil unions and one-half approves of same-sex marriages, the study moves to an explanatory mode. In trying to decipher which contextual and attitudinal factors predict our dependent variable, a multivariate regression confirmed the importance of the contact hypothesis, traditional gender roles and specific etiologies (i.e., "sexual orientation is due to biological causes")."

The session concluded with the paper "The Construction of Bisexual Identity in Work Environments" by Katie Nutter, Ohio University. Katie wrote, "Although queer theory is gaining popularity, research still focuses on homosexuals or ignores sexuality completely. Research exists about the coming out process for gays and lesbians in the workplace; how people discuss their sexuality shapes personal identity and relationships with others. In this way, the management of sexuality is one aspect of the emotional labor required in the workplace. I conducted in-depth interviews with bisexuals in an attempt to understand some of the ways this group chooses to reveal and discuss sexuality at work. In general, I seek to explain how these expressions affect self identity and work relationships. What are some of the techniques that bisexuals use at work when addressing sexuality? Ultimately, this work helps to validate the experiences of bisexuals."

NCSA-SWS Reception for Students

The NCSA chapter of Sociologists for Women in Society (NCSA-SWS) hosted a reception for students at the annual meeting in Cincinnati, with funding from the national SWS and the Department of Sociology at the University of Akron. NCSA-SWS is one of five regional chapters of SWS, an organization of "sociologists and social scientists who work together



to improve the position of women in sociology, and in society." NCSA-SWS has been a presence at the regional meeting for many years, hosting a lunch meeting for NCSA members to talk about research, teaching, and doing sociology with a focus on gender and women.

The reception featured an award given to [Marcia Texler Segal](#), former NCSA President, and long-time member and supporter of the regional and national SWS. The award, presented by Natalie Haber-Barker, honored Marcia for all she has done for NCSA-SWS, and especially her steadfast commitment to mentoring students and new professionals.

In addition to serving cookies and tea to the approximately 50 people in attendance, a student drawing for t-shirts and coffee mugs, donated by the University of



Akron's Graduate Committee for Research on Women and Gender, was also held. Students talked about their experiences as SWS members at the national, regional, and local level. Jodi Ross (University of Akron SWS-Chapter President), Michelle Jacobs (Kent State University SWS-Chapter President), and Marie Bozin (University of Akron SWS-member), talked about their experiences attending the SWS Winter Meeting in Las Vegas and being student members of SWS.

For more information on NCSA-SWS, including a membership form, visit <http://www.ncsanet.org/SWS/index.htm>. To become more involved in NCSA-SWS activities, contact Natalie Haber-Barker (nhaber@luc.edu) or Kathy Feltey (felteyk@uakron.edu).

Sociologists for Women in Society

is an international organization of social scientists--students, faculty, practitioners, and researchers--working together to improve the position of women within sociology and society in general. There are local and regional chapters, including NCSA SWS.

**2008
NCSA AWARDS**

Recipient of the 2008
J. Milton Yinger Distinguished
Lifetime Career Award

Robert Perrucci
Purdue University



Keith Roberts (left) presents Robert Perrucci (right) with a plaque for the Yinger Award

Recipient of the 2008
Scholarly Achievement Award

Edward Morris
Ohio University
for his book

An Unexpected Minority: White Kids in an Urban School (2005). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.



Debra Swanson (left) presents a plaque to Edward Morris (right) for the Scholarly Achievement Award

**From the desk of President
Jay Weinstein**

Before sharing a few thoughts with you about this coming year of NCSA activities, let me take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the 2008 Program Chair, Lissa Yogan, her committee, Past-President, Bob Shelly, Executive Officer, Dean Purdy, and the many others involved in organizing a great meeting in Cincinnati. From the excellent program: panels, workshops, and special sessions, to the many opportunities to meet with friends and colleagues, this was one of the best ever.



The 2009 Annual Meeting will held April 16-18 at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Michigan. The theme, "The Sociological Way of Looking at the World: Teaching, Research, and Application," is taken from the title of a book by Louis Schneider, who served as President of the NCSA predecessor organization, the Ohio Valley Sociological Society, in 1959-60. The Program Chair, Lynn Ritchey, has appointed an outstanding committee to help with the work. So start planning now to organize a session, present a paper, and encourage your colleagues and students to join us. For further information, deadlines, etc., please visit our web site at www.ncsanet.org.

As a long-time resident of Dearborn, I can assure you that there are more good restaurants, clubs, and other attractions in this newly-recreated city than you can possibly sample over the course of one short weekend. To mention just two highlights you won't want to miss, within a short drive from the hotel is the world-renowned Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum (that houses one of the largest IMAX theaters in the region). Also close by is the new Arab American National Museum, the chief cultural attraction of Dearborn's large and diverse Arab-American population. Not much farther from the meeting site to the east is, of course, Mo-Town and its museums, parks, and theaters. And to the west is Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti, two

campus towns that are home to more than 70 thousand students and faculty members from throughout the world.

As NCSA President, I hope to help guide the organization in addressing issues of our growth potential and mission that were identified by Bruce Keith and Jay Howard in their recent Presidential addresses. With these concerns in view, I would like us to consider three initiatives: The first is to encourage a greater degree of participation and leadership by the region's larger, Ph.D.-granting institutions. Although smaller schools and those that specialize in non-doctoral programs do and will continue to provide the major share of the NCSA membership base, the larger universities have an enormous amount to contribute – quantitatively and qualitatively – to our future prosperity. If any of you are interested in joining us in this effort, send me a note at jay.weinstein@emich.edu.

The second initiative involves a long-standing commitment of NCSA to increase the participation of the many community colleges in our region. This remains a very important, largely untapped, and elusive resource. We do have a standing committee with this mission, chaired this year by Sean Frost of Sinclair Community College. Please contact him if you would like to help.

The third initiative is to take better advantage of the fact that NCSA is not only a regional organization but it is also an international one. That is, the Canadian Province of Ontario is an important – and geographically by far the largest – part of NCSA. The opportunities for involving the numerous universities, colleges, and community colleges in Ontario are virtually unlimited. Hans Bakker of the University of Guelph has agreed to take the lead in this effort, and we have already discussed several ways in which we can forge closer ties with our colleagues "North of the Border" (actually, it is South of the Border if you live in the Detroit area). We have met in Ontario (Windsor) in the past, and we are discussing future plans for a return visit. Please contact Hans if you are interested in this work.

One final reminder: In 2010, we will be meeting again with the Midwest Sociological Society. The meeting is scheduled for Chicago on March 31 to April 2. Those of you who were in Chicago in 2007 will remember what a phenomenal event that was. Be sure to put that date on your calendar.

I wish you the best during the coming year, and look forward to seeing you in Dearborn next April, if not before.

“Canadian Editions of American Texts: But No American Editions of Canadian Texts?”

By J.I. (Hans) Bakker
University of Guelph

How “international” is the discipline of sociology? Recently Professor Jonathan Turner argued for the importance of true “laws” in sociology, a kind of nomothetic knowledge that would allow for “engineering” purposes. Not everyone agrees with this “Turner thesis.” One indicator of the relatively more restricted nature of sociological generalizations and “rules” is the fact that many of the examples used to illustrate a generalization are limited to specific nation-states. In simpler terms, American sociologists make generalizations about American society first and foremost. That which is “foreign” is largely secondary to that which is part of the “homeland.” This is illustrated in a clear but nuanced manner by publishing.

The power and influence of the U.S. in the English-language textbook market is such that American publishers have a big influence in Canada. The U.S. population is about ten times as great as the Canadian population, which accounts for part of the difference. American publishers have financial resources that Canadian publishers do not have. In almost all of the social sciences there are important American texts that are also published for distribution in Canada as “Canadian editions.” For example, the well known American sociology text by John J. Macionis (first edition 1987) came out with its first “Canadian edition” more than a decade ago (Macionis, Clarke and Gerber 1994). The fourth Canadian edition (Macionis and Gerber 2002), the fifth edition, and the sixth Canadian edition (Macionis and Gerber 2008) are currently in use. John Macionis, from Kenyon College, received the NCSA teaching award in 1998, in part due to his prodigious work on textbooks. His introductory text already had international coverage and a global perspective, by which I mean it included examples from many countries and provided information from survey and demographic data that had a good deal of global content. But to the average Canadian instructor facing a largely Canadian undergraduate audience it lacked sufficient depth in terms of Canadian content. So the publisher asked Juane Nancarrow Clarke and Linda M. Gerber to create a Canadian edi-

tion. Published by Prentice-Hall in Toronto (Scarborough), Ontario, the first Canadian edition was a success. It is now used widely at Canadian universities. The first Canadian edition (Ce) starts with a distinctly Canadian episode, the December 6, 1989, murder of fourteen female engineering students in Montreal (at *l'ecole polytechnique*). The fourth Ce drops that very important event for another important “Canadian” event, violence toward civilians in Somalia by Canadian peacekeeping troops.

The “global perspective” is placed in a distinctively Canadian milieu, albeit only as an added layer. The basic core of the text of a Ce remains very “American.” The UN Human Development Index (HDI) placed Canada at the top at one of the Ten Best Places to Live in the World. That is very clearly reported in the Ce. In almost every “institutional” sphere (e.g. family-kinship, politics, economics, military, education, health-



Dr Jonathan Turner (left) and Dr. Hans Bakker (right)

medicine, social work-social welfare, culture) and from almost every “social change” perspective (e.g. collective behavior, social movements, world systems, modernity, post-modernity, globalization) there is care taken to include some relevant Canadian examples. Since Professor Gerber is very interested in aboriginal people or “First Nations” and since she is quite expert in the use of demographic information there is a rich mine of resource material about the demographics of Canadian First Nations people. What I find most striking, however, is not the existence of Ce’s but the way in which the information from Ce’s does not very frequently get utilized in American editions of American texts. One can examine the most recent editions of American textbooks in the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and even the natural and life sciences and find very little “Canadian” context, no matter how relevant. Many of the “boxes” used for examples of “Applying Sociology” are so distinctly Canadian that most American students would be less than interested. Statistics concerning divorce rates will not interest most American students. Other aspects of Canadian life may also seem less than relevant. Which American students, for example, would particularly care to take note of the disappearance of all but four of

the sixty aboriginal languages of Canada? Most likely it would only be native American



Indians who would be especially interested in the four languages remaining (Cree, Dakota, Ojibwa and Inuktitut). Similarly, details of French language rights in Quebec and New Brunswick are not as likely to interest American students. There is a certain justification for putting out Ce’s of American textbooks. But the phenomenon could be studied in more depth.

The major publishers often ask Canadian scholars (or, at least, academics at Canadian universities, many of whom are from elsewhere, and even sometimes from the U.S.!) to suggest or evaluate the Canadian content of their Ce’s. I know of only one introductory sociology text that has been written by a Canadian sociologist (Brym 2001) and that has had some impact on the American market. (It would be interesting to know if Brym’s book is used in the NCSA geographical area, outside of Ontario. It would also be fascinating to know if any major publisher has ever asked an American sociologist to comment on the American content of a distinctively Canadian textbook!) I fully understand why a map showing the average percentage employment in government service in different provinces of Canada would not appear in the American edition of Macionis. There are many aspects of Canadian content that can definitely be left out. But there are also other aspects that one would expect to eventually see woven into the American edition. After all, Canada is the largest trading partner of the U.S. (larger than the PRC). But for the average college age student of sociology in the U.S. there is no mention in the chapter on “sex” (Macionis and Gerber 2002: Chap. 8) of Pierre Trudeau saying (December 1967) that “the state has no place in the nation’s bedrooms.” Much of the material in the Chapters of the 6th edition on Politics, Race and Ethnicity and Feminist Perspectives has relatively little American content. Gerber estimates that one third of the book is entirely her work; one third is Macionis’ work; and the remaining third is a collaborate effort. But how much of Macionis and Gerber (2008) will find its way into subsequent American editions of Macionis?

What concerns me the most is the absence of sociological theorists from Canada in American introductory sociology textbooks. Are Harold A. Innis, John Porter, Marshall McLuhan and other Canadian sociologists any less important than, say, Erving Goffman? Oops! *I almost forgot!* Goffman was

born in Alberta (1922) and received his B.A. from the University of Toronto. (Another Canadian at the "U of T" who went on to becoming a famous American sociologist is Dennis Wrong. He made it to the first Ce of Macionis, but is dropped and is no longer listed in the fourth Ce!) No doubt a part of my irritation is due to the fact that while some of my work (in American journals!) is included in the Ce (e.g. Bakker 1999), it does not seem to get mentioned in the American edition of Macionis.

IDEA: It would be interesting for those teaching introductory sociology at universities and colleges in the U.S. to do a little experiment. Specifically ask for the Canadian edition of the text you are using and try using it with your American students. Present it as a learning opportunity. My hypothesis is that American students might actually enjoy the experience. But it is quite possible that I may be wrong. Perhaps reading an American book through Canadian ideas might be just a bit too much for the average American student. Anyone teaching more than one section of introductory sociology could easily do this "experiment," and, of course, two colleagues could compare notes. Let me conclude by specifically pointing out the obvious. Professor John J. Macionis definitely deserves the NCSA teaching award, and it is only because of the high quality of both the American and the Canadian editions of his introductory textbook that I even bother mentioning this curious, but often overlooked, fact about publishing in North America. Professor Gerber's work has also been exemplary. (There do not seem to be any Canadian editions of publications from the U.K., even though they are very often extremely "British" in terms of examples.) In general, an hour or two spent examining the Canadian edition of a text that you are familiar with will probably illustrate the notion that much of our knowledge involves "generalizations" limited in time and space (place, country) and not true nomothetic laws. Perhaps more attention paid to subtle differences in Canadian editions may even help suggest ways to reformulate generalizations into true laws.

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Teaching Methods Using the Social Studio Approach

By Lissa Yogan (Valparaiso University) and Mark Gunty (University of Notre Dame)



A new workshop which focused on creating a lab atmosphere within a typical research methods class was offered at the 2008 North Central Sociological Association meetings. The idea of changing the classroom mode of delivery from lecture to activity is referred to as teaching using a social studio approach.

Research methods has long been taught as a lecture type course that occasionally included a few small exercises. Typical lectures would cover topics such as sampling, hypothesis writing, survey methodology, measurement issues etc. Typical activities might include writing a few hypotheses, doing a literature review and writing a final paper that integrated the main methodological concepts into a final research design.

The social studio approach is based on the model of problem based learning. In problem based learning students are challenged to learn material through the solving of relevant problems. When this is applied to research methods, problems are introduced to the students and they learn the necessary methodological skills as they work to solve the problems.



The workshop organizers (Dr. Mark Gunty and Dr. Lissa Yogan) helped the audience think about how to design basic modules which work together to teach students all the key concepts typically taught in a lecture-based class. They emphasized that teaching methods through a studio approach allowed students to learn through problem solving and repetition. For example, in each

unit, students begin to recognize the need to operationalize key variables. As students work to solve the problem of poorly defined concepts and variables, they build skills that will help them in subsequent labs. Each lab introduces a new strategy for conducting research (survey, field work, etc.) but also reinforces key concepts (such as sampling, measurement and operationalization of variables) that are needed in all types of sociological research.

Dr. Gunty and Dr. Yogan also talked about different ways of assessing students' work. They emphasized the need to evaluate whether students were putting forth 'good effort' and learning from their mistakes as opposed to memorizing definitions and/or attaining mastery of skills on first attempts. Both Dr. Gunty and Dr. Yogan use pre-lab and post-lab worksheets to help students process the lab experience. Some of the questions on the pre-lab worksheets asked students to think about ethical dilemmas they might face in each module, assumptions or hunches they brought to the research



question and their preliminary ideas for achieving validity. Some of the questions on the post-lab worksheet asked students to comment on how their understanding of some concepts and skills have improved and to relate how they actually made, recorded and converted observations into useful data.

The organizers also talked with the audience about why this method is sometimes difficult for instructors. They emphasized that teaching in this manner may be difficult for first time instructors. The social studio approach works best if the instructor feels confident with the basic material and is flexible in the classroom. Some problems that students will encounter can be anticipated but others can not. The process demands that instructors make judgment calls about how much time to allow for pre-tests and how much time to allow for post-lab processing. The emphasis in the classroom has to be on learning methods rather than producing great research. Both acknowledged that at times, letting faulty designs walk out of the classroom was difficult and yet it was often through design failure that the students learned the most.

GREENING THE CAMPUS: Needs Administration Backing and Faculty Managing

by Bill Tregea, Adrian College

Faculty from Cuyahoga Community College, Saint Mary's College, and Adrian College met in the March 29, 2008 NCSA conference "Greening the Campus" Panel to discuss successes and frustrations. Things are starting to happen on campuses but the consensus of the discussion group was that despite some progress, those pushing for green action on NCSA campuses are saying - "we're stuck."

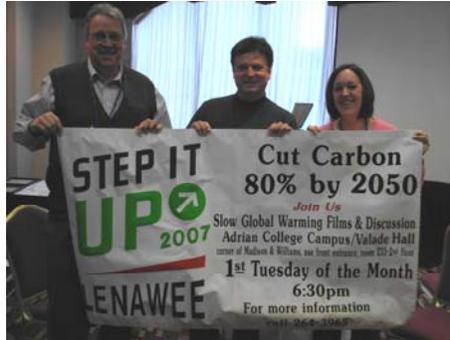
Susan Alexander reported some success at Saint Mary's College. For example, students and faculty working with the dining hall manager, got Marriot's (their food service) to buy more "local food." She reported "We had no recycling, so a student club started recycling. And the Sisters who founded the College have signed The Earth Charter Initiative." Saint Mary's now has a LED certified building. But, "there is no formalized system to get going," Alexander said, emphasizing that it's 'hit or miss' right now. "We can count on Catholic teaching on the environment, but we don't have a formalized structure in place to regularly address environmental issues."

Robert Shirilla and colleague Robin White from Cuyahoga Community College (which has multiple campuses) reported that they've been able to establish a campus-wide environmental committee. "We had a Gore-trained speaker" for a presentation which included an "Earth Ball so large you could walk into it." And they have been working on an idea to reduce the 300,000 hard copy printed class schedule books (for their 20,000 enrollment system). But they have been unable to get recycling going.

Bill Tregea from Adrian College reported that in trying to build a "campus-community alliance," students were part of the planning group for the Step It Up Rally of April 14th, 2007. However, students were leery of "marching" (only the older community gray-haired people marched peacefully). Students were not able to "push" for the set-up pieces for recycling, so Tregea, as a faculty member, worked with the Business VP to get a recycling contract with Allied Waste. He reports, "We were able to get campus-wide recycling going (11 dorms, 9 buildings) but the students were not able to organize themselves beyond officers for a club. The student leaders lacked a sense of how to "seize the moment." The leaders stalled in getting the recycling going because they were not personally ready. The effort subsequently fell apart and required a faculty advisor intervention to get it going

again.

Students in the Adrian College Recycling & Green Action Club were great once organized into a task force where "Officers" ran the monthly club meeting and the "Task Force" ran the recycling on a weekly basis. But garbage started showing up in the 40 foot recycling bin and Allied Waste backed out of the contract. Because Faculty Advisor, Bill Tregea, was involved in the monthly community "Step It Up Lenawee" meetings, he was able to get a local environmentalist who runs a recycling business to take over the campus contract.



The students at Adrian got much more involved in the "campus-community alliance" when Bill Tregea was able to offer an Environmental Sociology class spring 2008. With members from the AC Recycling & Green Action club in the class, we went to several community meetings and had guest speakers and there developed a sense of involvement for the students.

The conclusion of our discussion group was that it takes a lot of "managing" (initiating structures, creating the set-up pieces, channeling campus-community alliance through an environmental course, faculty advisor oversight of the environmental student club if doing a facilities-wide task like campus-wide recycling, negotiating with senior administration, and actively supplying ideas to the administration and students about "what could be done.")

Andrew Blum, writing in *Metropolis-Mag.com* writes in his Feb. 2008 article "Carbon Neutral U" that: "...nearly 500 schools have signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, which sets them toward climate neutrality by a specified date. ..

But Richard Levin, President of Yale, and an economist by training, who in 2005 chose a target of 43% reduction in carbon emission for Yale University by 2020 and has already cut emissions there by 17 percent says: "We're showing it can be done, but our carbon savings are miniscule compared to what needs to happen, And, even if you put all the educational institutions in the world together, it still doesn't add up to much. The answer has to

come from governments, and I think the major reason for doing this (greening the campus) is to enlighten the public so that ultimately governments will get serious about it." www.metropolismag.com/cda/story.php?article=3150

Andrew Blum goes on to write: "Higher education has emerged as a thrilling proving ground for a sustainable society. Schools of all statures and sizes – from the Ivies to red-state community colleges – are making the most of their fiefdoms, leveraging their educated and politically engaged populations, long-term outlooks, and self-managed physical footprints to make substantial changes. But with those changes comes a surprising reversal in academe's typical stance: the mechanics of the campus are occupying the brightest spotlight. Students, administrators, and faculty are obsessing over the cleaning products the janitors use, how dining-hall potatoes are grown, and which dorms consume the least energy."

If we're going to "enlighten the public so that ultimately governments will get serious about" slowing global warming, we're going to have to "step it up" on campus and "focus the administration" of campus on the need to support the effort. Willing faculty and students are ready – once senior management commits to the set-up pieces – to keep working at "greening the campus."

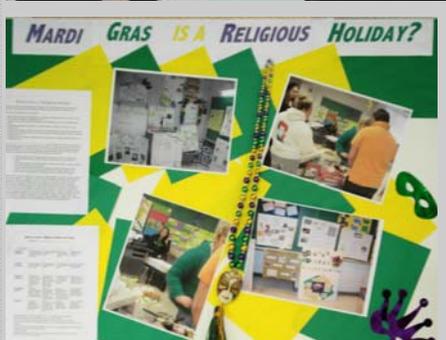
GREEN YOUR CAMPUS!

Go to:

<http://www.ase.org/section/program/greencampus>



**FEATURED SESSIONS:
POSTERS on DISPLAY**



Section On Teaching and Learning Co-Sponsors Workshop for High School Sociology Teachers

by Kathleen-Piker King,
Mount Union College

The Section on Teaching and Learning co-sponsored—for the fourth consecutive year—a workshop for high school teachers of sociology. Nineteen years ago, the North Central Sociological Association's Teaching Committee decided to sponsor a workshop for high school teachers living in the region where the annual meeting was to be held. Teachers could receive continuing education units for attending. There has now been a workshop for high school teachers every year, save two, since 1990. The STLS's Cooperative Initiatives Committee decided four years ago to be supportive and to participate in co-sponsorship of this event.

This year the workshop was in Cincinnati on Friday, March 28th, at the Hilton Netherland Hotel. The organizers, Keith Roberts (Hanover College), Kathleen-Piker King (Mount Union College), and Diane Bryant (a high school teacher from Sandusky, Ohio), recruited other workshop co-leaders. This year's guest co-leaders were Kathy Rowell (Sinclair Community College), Kathy Felty (University of Akron), and Angie Andriot (Purdue University). The sessions included in the workshop were:

- Linking H.S. Sociology to State Social Studies Standards
- Textbooks Appropriate for the High School Sociology Course
- Teaching about Gender and Gender Stratification
- Teaching about Race, Ethnicity, and Class
- Videos in the Sociology Course
- Simulations and Games for Teaching Sociology
- Sharing Lesson Plans (each teacher brings a favorite lesson to share)

Attendees were introduced to the services of the ASA Teaching Resources Center, were provided information about various publications and websites with active learning instructional strategies, were given opportunities to network with other high school sociology teachers, and left the workshop with roughly 100 active-learning instructional strategies ("lesson plans"). The workshop

ended with a poster session with every high school teacher—and many college instructors—sharing an innovative lesson plan or teaching strategy. In addition, each year the registrants are given a monograph on teaching. This year they each received a copy of *The Creative Sociology Classroom* (Pratt, Rienenrth, and Parks).

In 2007, the meeting was held in Chicago and had no less than 52 high school teachers in attendance. This year the workshop organizers had help with publicity from the Councils for the Social Studies from adjacent states, but they also sent letters to 270 high schools within a 70 mile radius of Cincinnati. Although the attendance this year was below the record set in Chicago last year, the participants were a group of enthusiastic, de-



voted teachers of high school sociology. This year's participants made such comments as: "This is the best workshop I have attended" or "This has honestly been the most useful workshop I have attended in my six years of teaching."

One of the co-organizers of the workshop has also organized a nation-wide listserve for high school sociology teachers. Perhaps because of that, and perhaps because this is virtually the only on-going program of its kind in the nation, the workshop has gotten inquiries and registrations from around the U.S. In the past, attendees have flown in from Maryland; another arrived from North Dakota. There have also been inquiries from interested teachers in Nevada, California, and Arizona. There is clearly a need for similar programs across the country.

For more information, contact Keith Roberts, Hanover College: robertsk@hanover.edu

TEACHING SESSION

Books That Help Us Teach

By Kathy Feltey, University of Akron,
and Matt Lee, University of Akron

The session, 'Books That Help Us Teach,' organized by Matt Lee, University of Akron, was held at the NCSA meeting in Cincinnati this year. This session was originally developed by Lissa Yogan, Valparaiso University, who organized it for the 2007 meeting in Chicago. As in the past, the presenters this year each discussed a book that has influenced their thinking about teaching, research, and the academic life.



Buddhist principles and practices were a dominant theme in the session, although it was not organized with this in mind. The session opened with a presentation by Kathy Feltey, University of Akron, on the book *Mindful Inquiry in Social Research* by Valerie Malhotra Bentz and Jeremy J. Shapiro. As the title implies, researchers can practice mindfulness in the way they approach their research question, methods, and participants. Drawing from the intellectual traditions of phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social science, and Buddhism, the authors provide guidelines for how to think about the position and perspective of the researcher. Of central importance is the idea that "knowing involves caring" which leads to human-centered research with the goal of reducing suffering (our own, as well as that of others).

The second presentation by Mary Beth Krouse, The College of Mount St. Joseph, was on Thich Nhat Hanh's most recent book, *The Art of Power*. The prevalent view of power is that it is a force that enables us, as individuals and societies, to control and dominate others. In *The Art of Power*, Thich Nhat Hanh proposes a different kind of power, one that is not tied to "wealth, professional success, fame, physical strength, military might, and political control." This represents a redefinition of power to focus on constructive uses, such as the power to overcome anxiety about the future in order to be happy in the present moment. This led Krouse to ask a series of related questions, including, "How do I use my power in the classroom?" and "Is it possible to model happiness and invite students into happiness?"

The third presentation, *The Prisoners' World: Portraits of Convicts Experiencing the Incarceration Binge* by William Tregea and Marjorie S. Larmour, was made by the first author of the book. Putting into practice some of the principles reviewed in the first two books (although not explicitly adopting a Buddhist perspective), Tregea and Larmour have collected autobiographical writings

from prisoners taking Tregea's sociology class while in prison. Tregea, who has been teaching in prison educational programs for two decades, has continued to teach in prison despite the elimination of state funds. *The Prisoners' World* provides a first-hand view of the lived experiences of men who are serving time, from their pre-prison life in the community to their institutionalized life in the prison world. By writing books that include the voice of prisoners, Tregea is better able to convey information about the reality to the criminal justice system to his university students.

Brian Fry, Indiana Wesleyan University, explained how *The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer, changed his perspective on and approach to teaching. He began his talk by noting that the first time he encountered Palmer's book he was skeptical, to the point of literally throwing it across the room. But he became more receptive to it as he struggled with teaching his classes. Eventually he came to appreciate Palmer's discussion of how to stop blaming students for failures in the classroom and instead begin creating a "community of truth." This requires that the instructor begin with who they are, rather than trying to teach in a style that they have seen others model, but does not fit their sense of self. Some teachers are best suited to become great orators, while others are more effective as facilitators.

Last, Matt Lee, University of Akron, described the powerful impact that Inge Bell's *This Book is Not Required: An Emotional Survival Manual*, has had on his teaching style and general approach to academic life. First published in the 1980s, it has been updated with an appendix on Buddhist Sociology. The book is actually written for beginning undergraduate students, and as the title suggests, it is a survival manual for navigating university life, both inside and outside of the classroom. But it is a wonderful book for instructors as well – not as a teaching manual or a how-to book, but as a critical reflection on education as it is practiced and as it might be. Bell (1991:6) writes, "In my years as a college teacher, I succeeded in what was ever the chief ambition of my career: to keep my students awake." Anyone who is interested in attaining this lofty goal would do well to read this book.

If you would like to take a look at the books presented in last year's *Books that Help Us Teach* session, go to: <http://edithsb.googlepages.com/booksthathe lpusteach>

NCSA STUDENT SECTION UPDATE



The NCSA can play an integral role in your sociological development and it can be just as valuable to your career. By joining the Student Committee, you open yourself to a myriad of opportunities to meet other students (graduate and undergraduate), actively promote the value of teaching sociology, advocate for social change, and build your Curriculum Vitae.

As a member of the Student Committee, you have the opportunity to facilitate undergraduate round tables, make significant contributions to growing membership of NCSA and develop the leadership skills that are crucial to being a future faculty member. The opportunities are limitless. NCSA can make a difference in your sociological endeavors, so I make the same recommendation that others offered me. Take part in NCSA and join the Student Committee.

At the very least, make it a priority to attend next year's NCSA annual meeting, a rare and exciting collaborative event.

Go a step further and join the Student Committee by checking out the student section of the NCSA website an email to the NCSA listserv:

NCSA_Students@googlegroups.com

For more information on the student committee does, go to:

<http://www.ncsanet.org/students/index.htm>

TEACHING TIP "Embracing the 'Gunner'"

By Todd M. Callais
Denison University

The "gunner" is the student who monopolizes classroom discussion creating a distraction for his/her peers and a burden for teachers. The gunner raises his hand when it is time to move on and tells stories that he believes single-handedly defeat fundamental theories of sociology. The gunner is a stress to the teacher and a drain on class morale because he preempts others from speaking. I have developed a strategy for individuals having trouble with aggressive students, "Embracing the Gunner." "Embracing the Gunner" is a four-step strategy that allows a teacher to satisfy the gunner while simultaneously using his energy to inspire other students.



Step One. change the way that you think about the gunner. It is important to remember that gunners are alert, willing to talk when others will not, and create energy in class that can be harness into effective discussion. Psychologists note that the gunner wants to be recognized and admired for his contributions and that disrespect is not meant to the professor. In business settings, a manager might harness the gunner's energy, putting him in competition with others or giving him more challenging tasks. Research on teaching advocates deterring the gunner from participating and/or creating structured ways of regulating and forcing participation from other students; sociologists attempt to control what other disciplines endeavor to cultivate.

Step Two. determine the gunner's beliefs. The gunner likely has a style of participation and set of opinions that you can determine by the third week of class. If you are having trouble identifying her beliefs, try talking to the gunner before class and see what she think about the readings or the topic of the day.

Step Three. acknowledge the gunner without giving him the floor. When his hand is raised, hold your raised hand toward him and give a reassuring head nod to imply that you are aware that he knows the answer but want to hear other voices, even if no one has yet to raise a hand. A second strategy involves "proxy arguing," when the professor

makes the point for the gunner. The first time I saw a gunner raise his hand I said, "Jim is about to say that sexist advertising only exists because the public wants it, so it's unfair to criticize advertising agencies." I looked at Jim and said, "right?" Jim nodded and I asked "Are we going to let him get away with that?" Some students defended Jim sensing that he would not be talking and some empowered my entrance into the discussion, spoke up in dissent. A third strategy is to cite prior gunner comments as starting points for conflicts in discussion. Gunners want to be respected and noticed; this strategy gives them what they want while facilitating discussion for others in the class.

Step Four. Follow up regularly. While this strategy is rewarding, there are risks. You are walking a fine line when embracing a gunner, so it is important to occasionally reinitiate contact with the gunner to be sure she feels empowered as opposed to alienated.

In the years that I "embraced" I have noticed a positive response from other students in the course. Employing such a strategy can improve the dynamic of your classroom, if you are comfortable embracing the gunner.

Beyond the Ivory Tower: Professionalism, Skills Match, and Job Satisfaction in Sociology

By Roberta Spalter-Roth
American Sociological Association

On Friday, a special session was given by Roberta Spalter-Roth, Director of Research and Development at the American Sociological Association, on "Professionalism, Skills Match, and Job Satisfaction." Spalter-Roth began by noting that in the U.S. sociologists have always worked outside of academia by applying sociological research and a sociological perspective in the courts, health and welfare organizations, social policy-oriented foundations, marketing firms, and government agencies. However, applied sociological work, Spalter-Roth said, has often been ignored by academic sociologists who believe that it may lower the prestige of the discipline. Furthermore, training in applied work has been virtually absent in top-ranked sociology departments. Spalter-Roth said the ASA is interested in reinvigorating efforts to increase employment outside of the professorate, especially if the are professional-level jobs with high job satisfaction.

Given current debates on the loss of

autonomy and the growth of contingent work in the professoriate, Spalter-Roth describes a study by the ASA for the purpose of investigating whether jobs that are not in the professorate reflect the sociological training and the characteristics of a scholarly profession.

To find out what kind of work sociologists in research, policy, and applied settings do and their



satisfaction with this work, the ASA conducted a survey of more than 600 PhD sociologists in non-academic settings. The ASA found that these applied sociologists held positions held in health (30%), education (14.2), demography (10%), criminal justice (6.5%), and environment (5.2%); see ASA website for full results. These positions included professional characteristics such as autonomy, use of a sociological perspective, and use of skills learned in graduate school. They applied theory and methods to specific social issues including health epidemics, immigrant assimilation, globalization of law, family structure, industrial downsizing, and community engagement.

The ASA report concluded with a discussion of the need for more than one career model and suggestions for increasing the number of career models in sociology. Among the most important recommendations are increasing information about non-academic careers, including applied and/or evaluation methods of research, and increasing mentoring and networking outside of academia.

For more information, contact:

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http://www.asanet.org/galleries/Research/BeyondIvoryTower_slides.PPT



COMMENTS?

Got an idea for a newsletter article?

Contact
Susan Alexander, Editor



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Thank you to Katie Claussen Bell for her help in photographing the 2008 NCSA meeting.

2008-2009 NCSA Executive Council

The newly elected North Central Sociological Association officers for 2008-09 began their term at the Business Meeting on March 29.



The NCSA executive officers include: President, Jay Weinstein, Eastern Michigan University, Vice-President Lynn Ritchey, University of Cincinnati, President-Elect, Kathy Rowell, Vice-President Elect Deb Swanson, Treasurer Anna Linders, University of Cincinnati, Secretary Leslie Wang, Saint Mary's College, Membership Chair, Kathy Feltey, Council members at large Mellisa Holtzman and Carollette Norwood, University of Cincinnati, and Student Section Chair Shelly McGrath, Southern Illinois University – Carbondale.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

FACES FROM THE 2008 NCSA Meeting



JOIN us in 2009!

2009 CALL FOR ORGANIZERS

**North Central Sociological Association
2009 Conference
April 16-18
Hyatt Regency – Dearborn, MI**

Theme:

“The Sociological Way of Looking at the World: Research, Teaching, and Application”

If you are interested in organizing a session, send your proposal to the appropriate person LISTED BELOW.

Please include:

1. Title of your session
2. Your name and institutional affiliation
2. Mailing address AND email address
3. Telephone and fax numbers
4. Send **NO LATER** than **August 31, 2008**

Research Paper Sessions:

Debra Swanson, Hope College
swansond@hope.edu

Teaching Sessions:

Lissa Yogan, Valparaiso University
Lissa.Yogan@valpo.edu

Preparing Future Faculty/Professional Development/Workshops/Panels:

Leslie Elrod, University of Cincinnati – RWC
Leslie.elrod@uc.edu

Undergraduate Research Sessions:

Carrie Erlin, Saint Mary's College
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Lynn Ritchey, Program Chair

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